

BB
175
277
472 of the twentieth century there were four cigarette factories and twelve
cigar factories in the Recôncavo.⁴⁷

B
BB
647
249
654
656 As was characteristic for other products in Brazil, a semi-
autonomous government organization was set up to stabilize the tobacco
industry in Bahia—the Instituto Bahiano do Fumo (Bahian Institute of
Tobacco). Founded in 1935, the Instituto attempts to stimulate the
production and improvement of techniques and quality, supervise market-
ing through a grading system, set minimum prices, and control export of
leaf tobacco. Although the Instituto has not succeeded in changing
significantly the techniques of the tobacco industry, it has been
reasonably successful in maintaining production and price.

BB
175
178
249
245 Just as Bahia had been displaced from its leading position
within Brazil, so in turn was the Recôncavo displaced from its exalted
position within the state. Tobacco replaced sugar as Bahia's leading
commercial product in the nineteenth century, but forfeited its position
to cacao in the twentieth century. The replacement of sugar by tobacco
was primarily a shift within the Recôncavo, but the rise of cacao
brought to the fore Bahia's southern coast. In one sense, however,
the Recôncavo retained its old centrality—Salvador remains today the
leading political and economic focus of the state, even for the cacao
trade.

BB
433
249 The continued importance of the Recôncavo in Bahia has been
partially the result of the vested interests of the sugar and tobacco
BB
161
162 systems. In addition, the Recôncavo remains today the leading center
of population in Bahia, despite its relative decline. In 1872 the
Recôncavo had at least 450,000 out of a total state population of
1,379,616. Thereafter the position of the Recôncavo declined, so
that by 1940 only one-fourth of the almost four million people of the
state lived in this region. However, the compact population

241 satisfaction with traditional ways but also because the low level of
178 literacy makes difficult even the presentation of new methods. The
212 low level of literacy directly limits the media available for propaga-
tion of new ideas, and there is little consciousness of the existence
of other methods in other areas. These factors restrict the intellec-
tual horizon and reduce the tolerance for change.

241 As yet, mechanized agriculture is almost unknown--there are
407 probably less than fifty tractors in the entire Recôncavo. Agricultural
[242] machinery is confined almost exclusively to government agricultural
[354] experiment stations and extension services or to the largest sugar
fazendas--in 1952-53 the tractors of the fazendas were largely unused
because of the lack of new parts or general unsuitability for the
tasks at hand. A very small number of agricultural workers have had
any experience with agricultural machinery. The introduction of large
quantities of farm equipment would raise many problems related to skill
[493] and receptivity. However, the truck, bus, and jeep are omnipresent in
the Recôncavo, and the number of competent drivers and mechanics is
surprisingly large. Most of these mechanically skilled workers live
in the cities and towns, but some are available everywhere, especially
in the sugar area. In this area, too, many workers have had experience
with such massive equipment as the ox-plow. Thus the introduction of
tractors and their accessories into the sugar zone, the area most
adapted to mechanization at the present moment, would find at least a
small cadre of experienced workers available.

241 In addition to skills, the mode of labor and the attitude toward
461 work are important factors in evaluating the agricultural labor force.
Agricultural work in the Recôncavo tends to be a joint enterprise--it
is joint effort which makes it possible to perform many heavy or
000 arduous tasks with little mechanical assistance. On the cane plantations

241 are many local signs of the increase in cultivation—expanding rural
 311 settlement, overcrowded market facilities, and stories of the "old days"
 178 when life was more leisurely and the land problem less severe. Two
 [361] areas of the Recôncavo are in great contrast as far as the trend of
 land use is concerned—the Central Recôncavo on the one hand and the
 249 outer Recôncavo, especially the Southwest, on the other. As a result of
 311 the stabilization of the sugar industry by the Instituto do Açúcar e do
 178 Alcool and, undoubtedly, of the high fixed costs of the sugar industry,
 • [654] the area under cultivation in the Central Recôncavo has remained rela-
 [56] tively constant. Indeed, since large-scale speculation in the cultiva-
 tion of cane is no longer feasible, as a result of government control,
 it is possible that marginal lands have been withdrawn from cultivation
 or have been converted to other uses. However, the evidence of the
 present land use pattern, at least in the area north of the Bay, is
 against this hypothesis--there are no signs of abandoned cane fields and
 no extensive areas with any form of land use except those associated
 with the sugar industry. There are indications of the abandonment of
 cultivation near the lesser sugar cane area north of the Baía do Iguaçu,
 but the state of the abandoned sugar mills suggest that the decline in
 cultivation took place before the last decade. In general, then, the
 area in cane probably was relatively stable during the 1940's and the
 1950's, at least to 1953.

249 The situation in the areas of the cultivation of tobacco and
 244 manioc is more complicated, in part because the economies of these crops
 311 are not stabilized. The area in tobacco undoubtedly has fluctuated over
 178 a wide range from year to year, although the area in manioc probably
 has tended to change more steadily, since it is a basic food crop.
 There seems to be no question but that during the 1940's the area in

249 crop of poor tobacco without the application of manure. Commercial
244 fertilizers are beyond the means of all but a very small minority of
237 cultivators. Those large growers who have experimented with commercial fertilizers report unfavorable results, presumably because of excessive leaching in the porous soils.

249 (3) The system of seed selection is illustrative of the general crudity of cultivation. As indicated above, the seeds are taken from the old and repeatedly harvested plants of the preceding season. The only criterion for selection is survival--the seed plant continued to produce longer than the rest of the crop. This does not mean that it produced more leaf or better quality--indeed, the opposite is often
• [654] the case. Occasionally better seeds are available from the federal or
[242] state government, but the cultivators take little interest.

(4) The practice of harvesting the entire stalk or shoot at one time increases the variation in quality, since there are appreciable differences in the stages of development of the leaves. Immature leaves do not cure properly, while overripe leaves will produce only inferior grades.

249 (5) The primitive methods of drying and fermenting further re-
246 duce the quality of the leaf. Where the leaves are dried indoors over the fire, they acquire a smoky character. Frequently the debts of the
[422] cultivator force him to sell part of his crop prematurely so that a bulk large enough for fermentation is not assembled. On the other hand, if a large bulk of leaf is accumulated for curing and fermentation, there is always the risk of scorching, since thermometers are never used to check the temperature. A common abuse, and a costly one to the cultivator, results from delay in stringing the leaf up to dry. If the freshly cut leaves are allowed to remain piled in the sun before hanging, the green color is fixed. This damage cannot be

244
433
[438] 10,000-ton surplus. The surplus manioc of these municípios would appear to be marketed to the manioc-deficit areas of the Recôncavo, particularly the sugar cane area and Salvador. It is significant that those municípios [249] which were the leading producers of tobacco were also the leading producers of commercial manioc (Map 123). Although the exchange and processing of tobacco in these areas is well organized and receives some attention from government bureaus, the growing and processing of manioc remains an unrecognized enterprise.

249
244
433 The importance of the production of tobacco and of commercial manioc to the various municípios of the Southwestern Recôncavo is shown in the following summary:

<u>Município</u>	<u>Value of Production</u>	
	<u>Tobacco</u>	<u>Manioc</u>
Cruz das Almas	65	23
Conceição de Almeida	57	38
São Filipe	25	32
Muritiba	17	14
São Félix	54	-

One of the advantages of the relative balance of these two products is that in the event of a crop failure of one, the area would still have a salable commercial product. Moreover, since the production of manioc is relatively large, a moderate decrease in its yield would still leave this area with at least a minimum supply of food for its large agricultural population.

249
257
433
[654] Sugar cane is now the third crop in value in the Recôncavo, but it is maintained in that position only by government subsidy. It is a crop which either dominates the region in which it is produced or its cultivation is economically unimportant (Map 124). In part this is the result of the technological requirements of the sugar industry, which demand that large quantities of sugar cane be produced close to the mill so that the cane can be delivered quickly once it is cut. However,

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 354]

249 which it is hauled by railroad or boat to the mill, although sometimes
 497 the cane which is carried by boat is weighed at the mill. The rail-
 505 roads which handle the cane, as has been indicated, are owned and
 496 operated by the usinas, except that the government right-of-way is
 471 used whenever these tracks pass close to the plantations. One of the
 249 usinas is new and a few of the older mills have some new equipment,
 but the general level of technology is considerably below that of
 Pernambuco or São Paulo, and the mills are somewhat smaller. The usinas
 grind the cane, extract the juices, and refine the sugar by means of
 vacuum pans and centrifuges. The more modern usinas produce a high
 quality sugar, but in general the product is coarse and not a pure white.

274 The by-products of the large usinas and part or all of the cane juice
 385 of some of the usinas and engenhos is converted into rum or commercial
 262 alcohol. The sugar, rum, and alcohol from the sugar industry of the
 293 Recôncavo are consumed primarily within the Recôncavo and the adjoining
 438 regions of Bahia. About one-tenth of the production of sugar is
 439 exported, chiefly to Rio de Janeiro. The commercial alcohol usually
 382 is mixed with gasoline in the bulk plants in Salvador to provide fuel
 385 for automotive transport. By law a specified amount of commercial
 654 alcohol must be mixed with gasoline--this is designed to subsidize
 the sugar industry.

249 There are twenty usinas in the Recôncavo, and these produced
 471 an estimated 80 per cent of the total sugar of the state of Bahia in
 433 1948. The three largest of these are owned by a single sugar company,
 which also owns the associated plantations, transportation equipment,
 and cattle fazendas. This company plays an important role in the
 249 marketing of sugar from its own usinas and from other companies. The
 471 concentration of the cultivation of sugar cane and of the production
 178 of sugar in the hands of this single enterprise is a symptom of the

175
567
*249 time and remained high until the 1888 decree which ended slavery completely. Before this time there had already been a great deal of manumission.

175
567
*249 In fact, it is distinctive of the entire region that the relations between the whites and the slaves were relatively warm and intimate. Gilberto Freyre describes the intimacy between the moleque (little Negro boy) and the master's son as playmates, between the master's wife and her domestics, between the Negro nursemaid and her white charges, between Negroes and whites in other close relationships on these plantations. A good deal of race mixture occurred. It is still a joke in this region to say that a particular plantation owner "populated the area."

175
*249 The crises through which the sugar industry passed during its four-hundred-year history are interesting and worthy of consideration. During the first fifty years of production (until early in the seventeenth century), the sugar industry prospered and expanded. It was a "period of formation, official protection, and government stimulation, during which the liberties of production, transportation, prices and commerce suffered little or no restrictions."¹ The seventeenth century, however, was full of crises, one of the greatest being the war with Holland. In 1624 the Dutch attempted to capture Bahia but were repulsed. However, they sailed along the shores of the Bay of All Saints, burning and sacking plantations and setting fire to the cane fields. In the north the Dutch succeeded in capturing Pernambuco, which they retained for twenty-four years, also engaging in the production of sugar. In 1644 the Dutch governor, Maurice of Nassau, was recalled to Holland, and the colony was left undirected. The Brazilians revolted and recaptured Pernambuco.

175
*249 In 1666 there was an epidemic of smallpox in the Recôncavo which reduced the slave population and left many plantation owners without laborers. There followed a period of near-famine for some years, due to the lack of food-plant cultivation. While this situation continued, plantation masters frequently mortgaged their plantations in order to buy new

[731]
[426]
[458]

1. J. Wanderley de Araujo Pinho, História de um engenho do Recôncavo, 1552-1944 (Rio de Janeiro, 1946), p. 193. The following three paragraphs are a condensation of the material contained in pp. 193-220 (author's translation).

struck the sugar cane itself, and production again dropped greatly. At the same time, coffee began to attract attention in São Paulo and the few slaves for sale were sent there, where they commanded a higher price, thereby causing a shortage of workmen in the Recôncavo. In 1888 a final blow was the abolition of slavery. Production dropped to a new low, and the twentieth century was entered during what was called the gravest crisis the industry had ever experienced.

During the late nineteenth century there were several attempts to better the machinery used in the fabrication of sugar. New methods were introduced from abroad, and at the turn of the century the usina made its first appearance on the scene. The usina represents the large-scale central factory, designed to mill the cane of many plantations, thereby raising the total sugar production.² The state government took a hand and financed the construction of three factories which were given to various individuals as concessions. There was an effort to revive the industry on a different and stronger basis. At the same time, however, the Recôncavo, as well as other parts of Brazil, felt the pull of the rubber boom in the Amazon and lost some of its manpower. But once again a European war came to the rescue, and during the second and third decades of this century the sugar industry prospered. Many factories were erected, and there was a definite feeling of optimism, which ended abruptly in 1929 and 1930 as a result of prolonged overproduction. In 1933 the Institute of Sugar and Alcohol was established by the national government to regulate production. The new regulations caused dissatisfaction and disputes, and production fell off sharply, only to rise again after World War II when many of the restrictions imposed by the institute were lifted. At the present time the Recôncavo seems to be experiencing a mild phase of affluence.

It is the introduction of the large-scale central factory which holds the most interest for us in this recital of crises, for it was this innovation which brought the maximum amount of change to the town and the entire community structure.

The factory was conceived of as a large mechanized mill,

2. Hereafter, the word "factory" will be used to designate the usina; wherever the word "factory" appears it should be understood to mean sugar-cane milling factory, unless otherwise qualified. (Editor's note.)

VILA RECÔNCAVO

[The Usina]

*
249
221

(433)

kills the new shoots. Toward the end of summer, the pastures or garden plots which are to be made into new plantations (reço novo) are prepared, for such work is usually done in accordance with conditions of the land rather than only at the time of planting. New plantings yield an average of thirty to forty tons per acre. Cutting, transporting, burning, and planting are done by the resident workers, while the weeding and general cultivating are carried out by the migrant laborers.

Work in the winter period can usually be handled by the resident workers alone. The planting of cane goes on throughout the year, but the most favorable time is during July and August, when the rains begin to diminish in constancy and the sun shines longer. Cane planted at this time gives the greatest yield. The seed used is the top part of the cane itself, the "eye" which appears just below the leaves. As a rule each plantation furnishes most of its own seed. That for the summer planting comes from the cane which is cut to go to the factory, and that for the winter from small plantings made previously for the purpose. The state government also maintains an agricultural station in the area, from which the planters can get seed. During the winter all repairs are made on houses, fences, and equipment, and of course the necessary drainage ditches must be built or repaired and seasonal cultivation and clearing work must be done.

*249
435

(434)

The usineiros maintain that the agricultural operations pay more than does the factory. The factory plantations sell their cane at the same price as the private suppliers, a price fixed by the Institute of Sugar and Alcohol. This price has gradually gone up as have all the factory costs. But the ceiling price of sugar, which is Cr\$166,00 a sack, has not increased. In 1951 the cost per sack of sugar at Usina São Pedro was Cr\$132,00. Each year the costs rise, creeping nearer and nearer to the selling price. So while the books show that each plantation is making more money for its cane, the factory's books show a slackening of profits. At the moment, most of the factories in the Recôncavo are engaged in refining their processes in order to get a higher percentage of sugar out of each ton of cane. The Usina São Pedro is only able to get an average of eighty kilograms of sugar per ton of cane, while the largest factory gets one hundred kilograms per ton. The factory also loses money because it pays for the cane by the ton of dead weight, and not by the percentage of sucrose the cane contains. As a result the planters are interested in rais-

(433)

from the competition of other sugar-producing areas. Abolition was the factor which, in many cases, simply ended a struggle several decades old.

The overall production of sugar in the Recôncavo was already dropping noticeably at the time of abolition, and it continued to decrease afterwards. At the end of the last century, state-supported *usinas*, or large mechanical factories for milling sugar cane, were opened in an effort to stimulate sugar production. At the same time, various other *usinas* were opened by private capital. These central mills received and processed the sugar cane of many plantations. The *usina* had the advantage of freeing the planter from the worries of milling and marketing the sugar, allowing him to concentrate on higher production of sugar cane, while the mechanized *usina* was able to produce more sugar out of the cane, thus increasing production. This system of sugar production proved relatively lucrative, and the government *usinas* passed into private hands. The owners of *usinas* bought as many neighbouring plantations as possible, and in this way the *usineiros*, as they were called, became at the same time the mill owners and sugar-cane planters—employers of factory workers and of agricultural workers. The plantations which did not pass into the hands of an *usina* became *fornecedores*, supplying cane to one or another large sugar mill.

The *usina* system, however, in many respects did little to change the traditional plantation system. The plantations belonging to *usineiros* continue as separate units; each generally had an administrator, a man responsible to the *usineiro*, who is in charge of the plantation. As a rule the administrator, who is an employee of the *usina*, lives in the old *sobrado*, the former residence of the *senhor do engenho*, as the old plantation owners were known. The workers on the plantations and their families frequently still live in *senzala*-like houses, usually a long narrow building under one roof divided into separate apartments of two or three rooms. Despite many changes of technology, many examples of the old and the new exist side by side on these Recôncavo plantations. On the same plantation both mechanical tractor and ox traction may be used to pull plows. There are workers' houses side by side, one with electricity and a radio, and another using candles and kerosene lamps. Furthermore, the hierarchy of workers and specialists in sugar-cane raising persists little modified from the early nineteenth century. There are the field hands, the ox-cart drivers, the artisans and other specialists. The plantation is also approximately the same size as it was in the early nineteenth century (although several may be the property of one company nowadays) and it has about the same number of hired workers as it had slaves before.

But the *usina* system and other outside influences have made for many fundamental changes in the Recôncavo. In the very large

249
[471]
[567]

[433]
[567]
[654]
[471]
[433]

[471]
[473]

249
178

[407]
[492]
[365]

[463]

000